



CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Minutes – September 4, 2002 (Regular Meeting), September 10, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 17, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 17, 2002 (Special Meeting), September 18, 2002 (Regular Meeting), September 24, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 24, 2002 (Special Meeting), October 1, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), October 1, 2002 (Special Meeting), October 2, 2002 (Regular Meeting), October 8, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), and October 8, 2002 (Special Meeting)

MEETING DATE: October 16, 2002

PREPARED BY: City Clerk

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the City Council approve the minutes of September 4, 2002 (Regular Meeting), September 10, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 17, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 17, 2002 (Special Meeting), September 18, 2002 (Regular Meeting), September 24, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 24, 2002 (Special Meeting), October 1, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), October 1, 2002 (Special Meeting), October 2, 2002 (Regular Meeting), October 8, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), and October 8, 2002 (Special Meeting), as prepared.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Attached are copies of the minutes of September 4, 2002 (Regular Meeting), September 10, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 17, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 17, 2002 (Special Meeting), September 18, 2002 (Regular Meeting), September 24, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), September 24, 2002 (Special Meeting), October 1, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), October 1, 2002 (Special Meeting), October 2, 2002 (Regular Meeting), October 8, 2002 (Shirtsleeve Session), and October 8, 2002 (Special Meeting), marked Exhibit A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L, respectively.

FUNDING: None required.

Susan J. Blackston
City Clerk

SJB/jmp

Attachment(s)

APPROVED: _____
H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager



MEMORANDUM
Office of the Lodi City Clerk

TO: Council Member Howard

CC: City Council
City Manager
City Attorney

FROM: Susan J. Blackston, City Clerk

DATE: October 16, 2002

SUBJECT: Minutes – City Council meeting of 09/18/02

In your October 13, 2002 e-mail message you requested that certain comments you made at the September 18, 2002 City Council meeting be added to the minutes:

(EXCERPT FROM 10/13/02 E-MAIL MESSAGE)

...there is some language that I said during the Sept. 18th meeting regarding Paramedic/Transport that is on tape and that I would like to make sure is also in print. Thank you.

Reference pages 9, 11, and 12

Following Pat Patrick's reading of the Chamber's letter, I commented along the lines of..."As a business person, don't you think it is important to have a business plan? TO, recoup costs? When the Chamber and DLBP hosts events like the Farmers Market, they have a plan."

In my summary, I stated thoughts such as..."I believe we need paramedics in our fire department. It is important for us to be competitive with hiring. It is important that we keep/sustain the employees we do hire. We have already lost good firefighters to other areas.(etc. then...) I believe it is important that we recoup our costs. I believe we can cover most of our costs and even break even in a few years. The numbers that the Chief has might be a little different, but I don't think they are that different. Why wouldn't we want to have a business plan and cover as much cost as we can?"

Attached is a verbatim transcript of the actual comments made, as well as pages 9, 11, and 12 of the minutes of September 18, 2002, which indicate the added language in bold.

The minutes as amended are being presented for Council's approval at the meeting of October 16, 2002.

**September 18, 2002 City Council Meeting
Item I-2 – Lodi Fire Department Paramedic Business Plan**

Partial Verbatim Transcript

(Following Pat Patrick's reading of the Chamber's Letter)

EMILY HOWARD:

1 Regarding the discussions of partnerships, that did come up at shirtsleeve
2 sessions and prior discussions on this entire topic and I find it very interesting
3 that AMR would be willing to pay several thousand dollars per student to be able
4 to participate in the plan. They would receive a lot of those monies because they
5 are a national organization. Obviously it's a profitable business because they
6 would be willing to cover several thousand dollars expense for each student that
7 would participate in the paramedic process. They can only do that if they pull
8 funds from their national organization and they're making a profit. So there's
9 money out there when it comes to transport, as well as billing for all the different
10 services, and there is enough money out there to also support in my opinion,
11 Lodi transport for ambulance services and it does come down to, I believe two
12 main issues: Is there a need for better service with providing paramedics in one
13 capacity or another within the Fire Department in Lodi, and I believe, yes, there
14 is. I think the Council actually is, from what I'm understanding, unanimous on
15 that and I even hear representatives from AMR saying that would enhance the
16 level of service. So as a business individual then, know that we can enhance our
17 service by providing paramedics in one form or another, why would we not then
18 try and have as much cost recovery as possible and therefore consider strongly
19 providing the service of transport as well. You're a business individual, I'd be like
20 trying to say, well we need the farmers market, we need these different events
21 that we host but we're not going to collect any revenue from them, but we're
22 going to provide all these things for free, but yet we know they're needed. You
23 just can't do that. You need to have a business plan with it too and try and have
24 as much cost recovery as possible.

(During summary statement)

EMILY HOWARD:

1 Actually I'm delighted to hear that Council it sounds like, unanimously is in favor
2 of having paramedics within our Fire Department. This is a landmark decision
3 here in Lodi and I just think that's fabulous. I might be in the minority on the next
4 one, but I truly believe that it's important that we also provide transport as well for
5 our Fire Department. First of all, there are firefighters that would like to work as
6 firefighter and paramedic, and while that might be a smaller group of individuals, I
7 know that we have lost some very qualified and talented firefighters to other
8 areas that provide paramedic transport services and I think it's important that we
9 try and recruit and sustain the employees that do come to Lodi. Secondly, if

10 you're going to be having the cost associated with bringing on the number of
11 paramedics within the Fire Department, why not have a business plan to go with
12 it and a business plan that makes sense. And I understand there's discrepancies
13 in the numbers, but I don't believe they're that different in the bottom line and I do
14 believe it can be something that can, after the few years of the initial costly start
15 up fees, can be something that can break even and I truly believe that this
16 Council will be addressing that particular topic in the years to come. Finally I do
17 believe there's also just a wonderful benefit and need to providing that
18 transportation. First of all if we have an incidence where there's a car accident
19 and AMR responds with their ambulance and then there's a need for a transport
20 non emergency and AMR provides that transport and then there's a third
21 incidence, that's where that extra ambulance, if you will, the one that's based out
22 of the Fire Department could respond, or vice versa maybe the Fire Department
23 ambulance responds first and then the two other incidences take place, we have
24 the volume of ambulances needed to respond. I believe this Council will be
25 addressing this issue in the years to come, but I am at least ecstatic that the
26 Council is making a landmark decision tonight regarding paramedics.

transport service is more determined by the number of providers in the market, County configuration of service, and non-emergency transport billing contracts. Even expertly operated by our City Fire Department personnel, considering these factors are out of Lodi's control, how can anyone, no matter how good, be confident of a profit?

"If 'breakeven' is not achieved, then City ambulances will be subsidized by tax dollars. Why risk entering a new business field with uncontrollable market determinants, if we do not have to?

"In conclusion, if AMR has been negligent in their levels of service, then bring public pressure to bear. As our City Council, you are capable of galvanizing a community's focus as well as that of the media's, to demand the people and businesses of Lodi be adequately protected at acceptable levels. We have not heard that degree of tenacious resoluteness from this Council, nor from the Fire Department, nor from the County Emergency Medical Services regarding AMR's service. Why?

"We remain open to be supportive of other plans should they be developed."

In summation, Mr. Patrick stated that there appears to be an unstable market right now. He defined "unstable" as meaning there are many ambulance providers providing service in Stockton that is driving change into the system. It is an inopportune time for the City to invest in this endeavor. Some providers have expressed an interest in providing ambulance services to Lodi, which would further reduce the opportunity of a return for the Lodi Fire Department. He has spoken with Elaine Hatch Director of the County's EMS who agreed that the numbers coming out of the Stockton Dispatch Center are flawed. If the Fire Department were to get into the ambulance business and be licensed by the County, the Lodi ambulances would have to go outside the city limits. Mr. Patrick believed this to be another disadvantage. He remarked that if this issue is about better service, then there must be a better plan than what was presented tonight.

Council Member Howard believed that AMR's offer to pay the salary differential and provide training for firefighters proves that there is a profit to be made through transport. ~~She supported the Fire Department's cost recovery proposal. She asked~~ **Mr. Patrick, as a business individual, why the City should not try to gain as much cost recovery as possible by providing the service of transport. As a comparison, she stated that by not doing so, it would be akin to the Chamber of Commerce offering the Farmers Market and similar events, without collecting any revenue for them. She emphasized the importance of having a business plan and recovering as much cost as possible.**

- Terry Piazza warned that if the Council approves the Fire Department's proposal the people of Lodi will have to live with it from now on, as there will be no way out of it. The union will control all the people and the private ambulance company will be gone. He noted that nothing in the letter Chief Pretz read from Joseph Harrington indicated that the hospital was in support of the Fire Department taking over ambulance service in the City. He believed that Chief Pretz' financial calculations did not adequately reflect the costs. He asked Council not to get the City into a position that it can never get out of.
- Michael Parker, President and Chief Operations Officer for Priority One Ambulance, stated that his company is the second largest ambulance provider in California. Priority One began providing service in Stockton two months ago. He provided Council with a copy of its county application for license (filed). Priority One attempted to provide service to the Lodi area, but found that the ambulance ordinance and zoning made it difficult. He agreed that the data from the Stockton Dispatch Center is flawed. He disagreed that Lodi would have local control if its Fire Department provided ambulance transport, because Stockton is required to dispatch the closest unit. When a call comes in to the 911 center it will be transferred from the Lodi Police Department to Stockton where it is screened as a secondary piece out. The moment they receive the call and start typing in their CAD system is when the eight minutes

response. Yet these complaints have not been documented and presented to the EMS agency staff to examine or investigate. In the past several weeks EMS has met with representatives from the representatives of the fire departments of the City of Stockton, Lodi, AMR Regional Manager, and the City Manager for the City of Lodi. EMS agency offered to bring all interested parties together to address these issues, but this invitation was rebuffed by the city fire departments."

Mr. Johnson referenced another letter from Elaine Hatch, in which it mentioned that the County EMS hired a consultant to review the data from the Dispatch Center. The consultant's preliminary findings are that the current data is not sufficiently reliable. Through May 2002 the EMS agency has not received any reports or patient complaints about ambulances not responding or where delays resulted in poor patient care. At the July Shirtsleeve Session of the City Council an emergency room doctor stated it was his opinion that there was no problem relative to ambulance service. Mr. Johnson questioned why no one has seriously explored the offer by AMR to provide training and salary subsidy for paramedics. This is a significant benefit with no additional cost to the community. Under Chief Pretz' proposal, if a citizen in Lodi uses an ambulance they will be paying for the service through their insurance, taxes, and a subscription fee. He emphasized that the Council should consider the financial impacts that NFPA 1710 will have on the City's budget.

- Terry Dockter reported that one month ago he had an accident in Bodega Bay and was rendered ambulance service from Marin County to a Sebastopol hospital. He received a bill from Bodega Bay Fire Protection District, with a post office box in Sacramento, which is their billing agency. The ambulance cost was \$1,856. The bill for five hours in the hospital was \$1,149. He noted that he is uninsured, and if the bill he received is any indication of what it would take to fund Lodi Fire Department paramedics and ambulance service, he was opposed to it.
- Dale Jones stated he had served as a paramedic for Lodi Ambulance, Life Medical, and AMR. His final position with AMR was as the Director of Operations. Currently, he is a consultant for the City of Stockton ambulance division. He stated that when the City of Lodi communicates a need for more ambulances, AMR adds them only temporarily until the issue dies down. He believed that putting paramedics on engines would be a great improvement for the community. He commented that his wife is an emergency room nurse and has witnessed delays in transfers due to the lack of ambulances.

Council Member Land reported that 69% of calls are for emergency medical and half of those are ALS 1 calls. He expressed support for placing paramedics on Fire Department engines and allowing AMR to provide transport.

Council Member Nakanishi supported the Fire Department providing paramedic services to improve patient care, but was opposed to ambulance transport, due to financial concerns and the risk involved.

Mayor Pennino also favored providing paramedics on Fire Department engines, but was opposed to transport. He believed that benchmark standards should be developed, and encouraged emergency service providers to sit down together and work on ways to improve response times within the county. If benchmarks are not met, then the Council should reconsider the Fire Department providing ambulance transport. He asked the City Manager to look into the issue of finding locations to place ambulances in the community. He was supportive of allowing other private ambulance providers to serve Lodi. He voiced strong opposition to subscription services.

Council Member Howard stated that she was delighted to hear that the Council was unanimously in favor of having paramedics in the Fire Department. She believed it was important to provide transport services as well, ~~and suspected that Council would be addressing the issue in years to come.~~ **She stated that there are firefighters who**

would like to work as firefighter paramedics. The City has lost some very qualified and talented firefighters to other areas that provide paramedic transport services. It is important to recruit and sustain the employees that come to Lodi. She reiterated the importance of having a business plan if the City is going to have additional costs associated with placing paramedics in the Fire Department. She acknowledged that there are discrepancies in Chief Pretz' proposal; however, she believed that they are insignificant to the "bottom line" and after a few years of the initial start up costs, the program would break even. She conjectured that the Council would be addressing this topic in the years to come. She described scenarios in which the Fire Department providing transport services would be beneficial, most specifically, that of having an adequate volume of ambulances in the City for response.

Mayor Pro Tempore Hitchcock stated that as a Council Member she has an obligation to look at providing as much revenue as possible to offset the cost of services. She voiced support for the Fire Department's proposal.

MOTION #1 / VOTE:

The City Council, on motion of Council Member Land, Nakanishi second, unanimously directed the Lodi Fire Department to proceed with providing paramedics on its engine companies and present the City Council with a plan during the 2003-04 budget cycle to phase in the program.

MOTION #2:

Council Member Land made a motion, Pennino second, to direct the Lodi Fire Department to form a public/private partnership with American Medical Response (AMR) for the following services as offered by AMR:

- AMR will provide paramedic training to Lodi Fire Department personnel through its affiliate Northern California Training Institute;
- AMR will provide remuneration of the 15% salary differential between firefighter and paramedic; and
- AMR will place Supplemental Transport Ambulance Resource (STAR) units at Lodi Fire Stations and negotiate a flat rate for each use.

DISCUSSION:

Council Member Howard stated that she was not in favor of a partnership.

Mayor Pro Tempore Hitchcock agreed and added that the City needs to maximize its revenue for the additional cost of providing paramedics.

VOTE:

The above motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Council Members – Land, Nakanishi, and Mayor Pennino

Noes: Council Members – Hitchcock and Howard

Absent: Council Members – None

RECESS

At 10:40 p.m., Mayor Pennino called for a recess and the City Council meeting reconvened at 10:50 p.m.

I. REGULAR CALENDAR (Continued)

- E-6 "Adopt resolution approving replacement purchase of an AS400 mid-range computer from Logical Design, Inc., of Rancho Cordova, CA (\$120,817.78)"